

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

Claims 1-7 (Cancelled)

Claim 8 (Currently amended) Apparatus for helping to protect an occupant of a vehicle, said apparatus comprising:

an inflatable vehicle occupant protection device inflatable to an inflated position for helping to protect an occupant of the vehicle, said inflatable vehicle occupant protection device including at least one vent; and

an inflation fluid source actuatable to provide inflation fluid for inflating said inflatable vehicle occupant protection device;

said at least one vent being positioned against a vehicle surface while said inflatable vehicle occupant protection device is in said inflated position to help block inflation fluid from venting through said at least one vent, said at least one vent being spaced away from said vehicle surface when said inflatable vehicle occupant protection device is obstructed from deploying to said inflated position,

~~Apparatus as recited in claim 1,~~ wherein said inflatable vehicle occupant protection device comprises an inflatable driver side air bag inflatable from a stored position on a steering wheel of the vehicle, said vehicle surface comprising a portion of the steering wheel.

Claim 9-12 (Cancelled)

Claim 13 (New)      Apparatus for helping to protect an occupant of a vehicle, said apparatus comprising:

an inflatable vehicle occupant protection device inflatable to an inflated position for helping to protect an occupant of the vehicle, said inflatable vehicle occupant protection device including at least one vent and material for covering said at least one vent, a rupturable member securing said material to said inflatable vehicle occupant protection device; and

an inflation fluid source actuatable to provide inflation fluid for inflating said inflatable vehicle occupant protection device;

said at least one vent being positioned against a vehicle surface while said inflatable vehicle occupant protection device is in said inflated position to help block inflation fluid from venting through said at least one vent, said at least one vent being spaced away from said vehicle surface when said inflatable vehicle occupant protection device is obstructed from deploying to said inflated position,

said rupturable member rupturing when said at least one vent is spaced away from said vehicle surface to enable inflation fluid to exit said inflatable vehicle occupant protection device through said at least one vent.

Claim 14 (New) The apparatus of claim 13 wherein said rupturable member is a tear seam that is ruptured by pressure of inflation fluid within said inflatable vehicle occupant protection device.

Claim 15 (New) The apparatus of claim 13 wherein said rupturable member is stitching that secures said material over said at least one vent, pressure of inflation fluid within said inflatable vehicle occupant protection device rupturing said stitching.

Claim 16 (New) The apparatus of claim 15 wherein said material for covering said at least one vent is a piece of fabric that is secured to said inflatable vehicle occupant protection device.

Claim 17 (New) The apparatus of claim 15 wherein said material for covering said at least one vent is formed by a portion of said inflatable vehicle occupant protection device.

Claim 18 (New) The apparatus of claim 17 wherein said inflatable vehicle occupant protection device is folded into a pleat, a portion of said pleat being said material for covering said at least one vent.